



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

is lost, though not where the right way lies; that he is in darkness though not where he may look for light; that he is weak, though not where strength can be found.

Such then is the inter-relation of these seven elements into which, for purposes of thought and language, Christian ethics has resolved its ideal of character. Needless to say that countless other justifiable analyses are conceivable and that neither this nor any other pretends to exhaust the concrete reality, any more than any possible number of descriptions of a flower or an insect could say all that is to be said about it. Races whose forms of thought and language differ from our own, beyond hope of translation, will not only speak but think differently; yet what they speak and think of will be the same; and who shall say that Christianity is tied inseparably to Graeco-Judaic modes of conception?

GEORGE TYRRELL, S. J.

RICHMOND, YORKS, ENGLAND.

THE POLITICAL BABEL.

FOR some time after the South African War entered upon its final stage we heard a great deal about "lessons of the war." Since then the nation has been told on the strength of this war's experience almost everything relating to attacks, cover, arms, ammunition, horses, how to finish this struggle and prevent its recurring in the future, besides a number of other things. These lessons may or may not be of much practical value to Commanders and Politicians. But there is another experience which we may call a lesson, not indeed of this war alone, though perhaps on no previous occasion has the fact I am referring to manifested itself in such marked manner as on this last one. I am alluding to the striking conflict of opinions and political convictions which this war has aroused. There have been, it is true, worse differences between political parties in all countries which even led to civil wars, but the fact which we must bear in mind is, that the differences I am speaking of have not originated in the internal

affairs of the country, but represent the clashing opinions of two great parties on the treatment of a foreign nation. Speaking of two great parties I am well aware that one of them represents a large numerical majority and the other a corresponding minority; but in endeavoring to treat the phenomenon before us from a psychological point of view we have only to consider one view as against the other, however large a majority there be on one side and small a minority on the other, provided only that that minority is sufficiently considerable to compel us to take it into account. Apart from this I shall have an opportunity of justifying my disregard for numbers later on.

To the average man, to the man in the street, the question of this conflict of opinions will seem very unimportant and its solution extremely simple: he will promptly settle it to his own satisfaction by looking upon those who hold the opposite view either as a kind of better class robbers and thieves, or as fools and traitors, according to the party to which he happens to belong. He will blandly declare that he simply cannot understand their reasoning! But to the foreigner living in this country and uninfluenced by any preconceived like or dislike for either party, if he be at all given to contemplation, this phenomenon is exceedingly interesting from a psychological point of view. For is it not the result of the natural and spontaneous development of the mind of a people enjoying the highest degree of liberty of thought and speech? We must admit that it is. Only a free exercise of this right of men can make the unrestrained expression of political opinions possible. And this is, generally speaking, a decided advantage and a sign of progress. But looking at this particular phenomenon we ask ourselves: "Is it natural and to the advantage of the nation that a divergence of opinions on the question of a war waged by this country should develop into that almost passionate animosity between political opponents which we observed on this last occasion?" Assuredly not! There is something sad and alarming in seeing an intellectually particularly healthy race split into factions which will go to such extremes as to freely accuse each other of the basest things.

We must therefore modify the first question we have asked

ourselves and put it in this form: "Is this phenomenon the *necessary* result of independence of thought?" This is a question of the greatest importance, because if we have to answer it in the affirmative, it would mean that freedom of thought and speech, which we have been accustomed to look upon as an achievement worthy of the most advanced nation, is a failure and ought to be suppressed. But happily we shall be able to find a different answer which will be something like this: It is only the necessary result *under the particular circumstances which at present exist* though it is likely to become worse in proportion as such independence of thought and speech continues to manifest itself,—unless those particular circumstances be altered.

Let us inquire into this matter. But before entering on this task I should like to lay stress on two things: First, that this essay is not intended to be any criticism whatsoever of the war just finished, and second, that my remarks are not meant to apply to any one particular nation. I wish to emphasize these two points particularly in order to avoid misunderstandings. My observations apply to the politics of all civilized countries alike, and if I shall endeavor to take my examples and illustrations chiefly from the late war, my reason for doing so is that it happens to afford the most recent instance and all circumstances connected with it are fresh in everybody's mind.

The circumstance which will strike the observer from the first, and which must have become apparent to everybody, is the fact that discussions on politics—whether home or foreign politics—scarcely ever end by either of the disputants being converted to the other's views. Let two men of ever so high an intellectual standard, but belonging to opposite political parties, discuss the difference in their views, and unless they are particularly good tempered they are more likely to part worse friends than they were before, than—in spite of the best arguments brought forward on either side—to agree on one single point. In fact it seems easier to explain to a blind man what red is like than to convince a political opponent.

Now, there is something very strange in this which requires explanation. Why do we not observe the same in any of the

other many topics of discussion? Surely it cannot be maintained that the reason is to be found in the abstract nature of the subject, because there are many equally abstract subjects with which the same is not the case. Take for instance the administration of justice, which is essentially an abstract matter and one which concerns the individual quite as much, and even more immediately than, say, foreign politics; and yet we scarcely ever find two people getting heated over it. The only controversies which can be said to present any resemblance to the political ones were those on religion in former times, when the passions aroused on both sides led to the cruellest wars since the age of barbarism. Yet the similarity is far from perfect. Religion is essentially a matter of individual belief, and the faith professed by one person scarcely affects the interests, or interferes with the rights of anybody else. We have therefore come to be tolerant in religious matters and generally refrain from discussing them. The probability is that those former convulsions were really due to the encroachment of politics on religious questions.

But we cannot afford to look upon the different political convictions of our fellow subjects with the same equanimity wherever the single individual is an active part of a governing body, *i. e.* wherever there is a self-governing people, because every single vote has its significance and a certain effect on the nation's interests and well-being. It follows that a nation will be the sounder the more united its component parts are.

Whenever during the last few years,—that is since the present war has made political discussions more passionate—I assisted at a controversy on this subject, I somehow could not help comparing the antagonists (I apologize to them for the comparison) to two men nearly coming to blows over the question whose carpet is larger. It appears that *A* has a square carpet and *B* a round one. “How can you say that your carpet is larger,” says *A*, spreading it over his own, “can you not see the four corners of mine projecting ever so far?” “How can you deny that mine is the larger,” retorts *B*, in turn placing *A*'s carpet over his, “if a child can see that mine protrudes on all four sides?” And maybe they will come to blows yet.

This seems to me to be very nearly what happens in all political disputes. Each of the opponents has his own particular way of looking at things, and there seems to be no common ground. The dispute may be protracted ad infinitum but without the slightest result. Truly a political Babel, where each section speaks in a language unintelligible to the others!

Again we ask: "Why is this? Are politics really so very different from all other sciences, and is there no room for logic, the great settler of disputes between cultured men?" I cannot for a moment accept that off-hand judgment with which so many people of either party are so ready to set their own minds at rest on this problem, by attributing the contrary views of other people either to a certain inexplicable perversity of character or to a special kind of mental aberration, as I myself have known men of the highest moral and intellectual standard, yet belonging to opposite parties. We must therefore look for some other explanation.

In our investigation of the causes of this phenomenon we shall do well to distinguish between political controversies within and without the Houses of Parliament. I do not mean to imply by this that the two are of an entirely different character, though undoubtedly there is a good deal of difference between them. But by treating them separately we shall be able to simplify our investigation by avoiding certain objections.

I, for one, do not doubt that at least the majority of the Members of Parliament are originally sincere in their course of action, *i. e.* they begin by joining the party which to the best of their knowledge and conscience is the right one. But from that moment it seems as if their personal convictions had been relegated to a back seat to make room for something else; that something else is *Party*. So in the instance before us, the question of the war: The Opposition party was perfectly entitled to approve or to disapprove of the war according to their own views. Rightly or wrongly they disapproved, and so far this is fair and legitimate criticism. But if we see men who represent sections of the English nation apparently eager to seize on every favorable opportunity to publicly accuse their country of waging war by unfair means,—and that in most cases on quite unreliable informa-

tion can we believe that they are still acting up to their convictions? No, something else speaks through their mouths, and that something else is *Party*. And how about the governing party? True, they have not gone to extremes to the same extent, probably because of the consciousness of their own strength and easy victory. But did they give that originally fair and legitimate criticism quite a fair treatment? Are they not to a certain extent responsible for the extremes to which the Opposition has gone by holding that party up to the nation's contempt from the very outset? Surely something must have prompted them that was not all honest conviction; that something was *Party*.

There seems to me to be a certain appropriateness to what we observe at present in the words of Herr Bluntschli quoted in Mr. Lilly's "First Principles of Politics," if we make the necessary deduction from his somewhat strong expressions. He says:

"If party zeal and party passion become so overmastering that parties would rather tear the country to pieces than join hands for its delivery and welfare, if a party abuses the public authority of which it has gained possession, unjustly to oppress and persecute those who do not hold with it, if parties combine with a foreign enemy against their own country and the nation to which they belong—then so unpatriotic a course expels the essential idea of a political party, and the party becomes a faction."

Mr. Lilly in the same book refers to a speech made by Mr. Chamberlain at Oxford in May, 1890, in which that gentleman concludes a favorable criticism of the party system with the admission: "When great national interests are at stake, when the safety of the commonwealth is involved, the party system breaks down." But what do we see? Great national interests were at stake, the safety of the Empire, or at least part of it, according to the statements of those politicians themselves, was involved, but the differences between the parties, so far from disappearing, have become accentuated to an almost alarming degree. The fact is that every party is liable sooner or later to degenerate into a faction, if for no other reason simply by virtue of that tendency so common in men to fly to extremes when strongly and successfully opposed. But how much more must this be the case under a party system as it

exists now in most European countries, where successfully supporting the Government on one side and successfully opposing it on the other, no matter on what question, means remaining in power for the one, or coming into power for the other.

The object of this inquiry is merely to establish on psychological grounds the causes of the observed irreconcilableness of political opinions, and from this point of view the party system undoubtedly does a great deal of harm. But even from a merely political and constitutional standpoint it is difficult to see what the advantage of it is, and high authorities on political philosophy have strongly denounced it. The chief argument in its support is that it ensures an effective and organized opposition and thereby a more thorough discussion of all matters before Parliament. But surely there should be no need for such incentive for the representatives of the nation to take an interest in, and discuss, the affairs of their country, particularly for such dangerous incentive. Without it, we cannot doubt that an equally effective criticism would be ensured which, being disinterested and conscientious, though it may not be organized, would be of immensely greater value than the present one, and more in harmony with the original idea of Representative Government, such idea being that the votes of the majority, given by each Member to the best of his knowledge and conscience, should decide. It is obvious that Ministers in power often have an interest in the maintenance of the party system because their position is practically unassailable while the Cabinet as a whole stands; but even this is a distinct drawback because the case may often arise when the country will hesitate to overthrow a Ministry the generality of whose members are inefficient because this may involve the sacrifice of, say, one particularly capable man who happens to fill an important post—for instance that of Colonial Secretary—to the greatest satisfaction of the nation.

We may now pass on to the second part of our inquiry *viz.* that dealing with the divergence of political opinions outside Parliament. This part of the investigation will prove to be by far the more difficult and complicated of the two, as the causes are not as obvious as in the first. It is of course not

possible to draw a distinct line of demarcation between political convictions (or whatever passes for that) of Members of Parliament and those of private persons, and to consider them two things entirely different from each other. There is a certain intermingling of the two round the line which we have drawn for the sake of simplification, as there are no doubt Members of Parliament who still hold their own political opinions in the same way as they would as private persons, and on the other hand there are a great number of the latter who in some way or other have a material interest in either of the parties which will tend to make them partial. But the great majority of private persons take at the most a purely sentimental interest in one of the parties, which—the self-interest being absent—cannot in any way be compared to the party zeal of politicians. This is the great difference which we have here to consider.

Now, self-interest being absent, we have to find out why political views of private citizens are found to be almost as irreconcilable as those of the political parties in Parliament.

If I may be permitted to revert for one moment to the simile of the carpets it will be noticed that *A* and *B* base their contentions on facts; on palpable undeniable facts. And yet their conclusions are diametrically opposed to each other. Quite the same may be observed in political discussions, each side using “facts” for their arguments and,—being perfectly convinced that a conclusion based on facts cannot possibly be wrong,—they do not see the necessity of using their minds any further, but, pleased with their own wisdom and logic, put their opponents down as “narrow minded” and “ignorant.”

Now, if facts may be used by both sides with such different results, there must be a fallacy somewhere, and in my opinion it is to be found in this: Facts, as such, do not enter in political philosophy. By “fact” we mean either an occurrence or a circumstance which is known to be true, it is something that really exists or existed, and as such cannot be used in political philosophy, which is an abstract science, any more than in mathematics we can add or subtract two quantities of an entirely heterogeneous character. To use them for the purpose

of forming our theories a process of assimilation must first take place, and this process is the *interpretation* of facts. It is this interpretation of facts which forms the basis of our judgment and not the facts themselves. Some may call this making a distinction without a difference, but to me it appears to be really the clue to the explanation of the phenomenon I am dealing with. There are very few things, if any, which are not liable to be interpreted in at least two very different ways. A man who is wont always to carry out whatever he has set himself to, may be called firm by his friends and obstinate or headstrong by his enemies; and who will undertake to say exactly where the one ends and the other begins? And as to historical facts we have only to read the various accounts of the deeds and characters of famous men.

Once we have made this clear to ourselves that it is not the facts but their interpretation which forms the real basis of our political ideas, the problem before us seems less complicated. In fact to arrive at its solution we have now only to find an explanation for these great differences in the interpretation of facts.

I will here for the last time refer to our friends *A* and *B*, to show now the one difference between their case and that of political opponents. Of course it may be said that they must be fools, as the use of such a simple thing as a clothyard would speedily settle their quarrel. Exactly so, but the possibility of resorting to that means is just where the two cases differ. Where is that intellectual clothyard which we could apply to our political ideas and thereby settle our disputes? With the facts as the raw material at our disposal, the process of turning out the finished article, judgment, consists in the interpretation of these various facts and fitting them together. But we cannot interpret, that is call a thing morally good or bad, without applying a certain standard measure to it. If somebody steals another man's property we do not hesitate to call this a bad action, but we are only enabled to arrive at this judgment by applying to the case,—though through habit this may be done unconsciously—the principle laid down in the eighth Commandment. And since this principle is generally accepted the

verdict will be unanimous. In the same way a judge trying a case measures, as it were, the offence by certain well defined and generally acknowledged principles, *i. e.* the law, and passes sentence according to the result. As a matter of fact it would be impossible to arrive at any judgment in any matter if we had no such standard to refer the case to. Let anybody with a very active imagination try to picture to himself the state of affairs that would exist, were all those fundamental principles which form the basis of our civil law non-existent, and everybody left to judge as he feels inclined! Well, to a certain extent that state of affairs exists in politics where there is a sad lack of such universally acknowledged principles, and a perfect chaos is only averted because even in politics we cannot,—or at least not openly—quite dissociate ourselves from the ethical rules which we have been taught to apply to our private life.

I have previously ventured to compare religion to politics, and there is no doubt a limited resemblance between the two. Every creed has of course a well defined standard of ethics of its own, but there is no such common standard between the different religions; hence the violence of former controversies. In politics even that standard for each section is missing and is supplanted by a set of general propositions, but these are very far from being well defined, and even to their own adherents they present a very shadowy and nebulous appearance. What were for instance these propositions of the pro-war and anti-war parties with respect to the South African War? Let us consider them fairly and dispassionately in turn.

The adherents of the Pro-War party maintained:

That since the Government of a foreign country refused to adopt such measures as were demanded by their own Government for the remedy of certain grievances of a very numerous English community in that country, the English Government was entitled to take such steps, and to bring such pressure to bear on the other side as ultimately led to war;

That by a sort of plebiscite it appeared that a large majority of the nation supported the Government's action, and that such majority being on their side it proved that the war was right and just;

That in the face of this it was an unpatriotic course for the other party to persist in their opposition, the only course left to a patriotic man being to take the part of his own Government in any dispute with a foreign country.

Now, if we can refer all these propositions to one standard, *i. e.* to one generally accepted principle or doctrine, and find them to be in accordance with its fundamental idea or teaching, we may unhesitatingly call them correct; as far as human judgment goes they are good and just. If on the other hand no such uniform standard can be found, if to justify those contentions we have to shift our ground, we must consider them, if not absolutely wrong (since we have no means of measuring them), but without any value whatsoever. Let us examine them.

What fundamental principle justifies the interference by one country with the internal affairs of another country? On what doctrine does one set of people base their right to dictate measures to another set of people within their own legitimate territory, and in case of non-compliance appropriate the latter by superior force? I shall be answered that it is the right and duty of a nation to safeguard the interests of, and to protect, its fellow subjects abroad. This may be so,—to a certain extent. But of what standard doctrine does this proposition form part? The intercourse between the units of the Christian part of the human race, as far as rights and duties are concerned, is at present regulated by one doctrine only: that of the Christian religion, or rather by the principles forming the basis of civil law, which is only Christian religion made practical and, as it were, brought up to date. And into that doctrine the above contention will not fit. There is no clause in the civil law which will justify one man's taking another man's property by force, and as to being one's own arbiter, why, the most honest and respected judge is by law disqualified from judging his own cause. And in the great Christian community, if we understand Christianity aright, all men, no matter to what nation they belong, should be considered equivalent, and the various nations composing it can only be compared to the families living in one country and forming one nation.

Passing on to the second proposition: on what grounds can it be contended that the opinion of the majority must necessarily be the right one? That indeed it has any more value than that of even the smallest minority? Here, it is true, we have an apparent parallel in the administration of civil law, inasmuch as in some countries the majority of the members composing a jury decide the verdict. But there are two differences which are fatal to the comparison: First, no person is admitted to the jury who has the least personal interest in the case that is being tried; and second, the juries are only called upon to decide on matters which any man of an average intelligence is supposed to be able to judge. But politics are certainly not such matter. Even the average educated man does not trouble himself greatly about studying political science and is quite satisfied with occasionally expounding his rather hazy ideas on the subject in more or less high-sounding words, supporting them with those commonplace arguments with which the leader in his daily paper provides him ready made by the dozen. How can we then expect the less educated and harder working laboring class to find the time for studying the matter and to form their own ideas? Politics seem to most people a very simple thing and a subject which any sane man can judge and understand. But those who take the trouble to look underneath the highly polished surface will soon be convinced that it is a very complicated affair indeed, rendered more so by the confusion of ideas which prevails. And even the student of political science stands bewildered at the flat contradictions to which the highest authorities on that subject treat each other on the most important points. Under such conditions what shadow of a value can the opinion of any majority have, consisting of people of whom say 90 per cent. are thoroughly convinced that they can judge any political question off hand! And if we want to know how such majorities are created, we find a very good description of the process in Sir H. S. Maine's "Popular Government." I am quoting Mr. W. Graham's summary:

"These two things, party and corruption, greatly aid in the production, not of agreement, but the appearance of agreement, in a multitude. There is

a third and very effective agency. This is the manufacture and confident utterance of general propositions on political subjects, a great device which imposes on imperfectly educated men who are much taken by it, almost as much as by ornate rhetoric. The party leader has discovered the secret of the manufacture in abundance and variety, and indeed nothing can be simpler. Utter these propositions, resting on the slenderest, flimsiest and often irrelevant base of facts, unverified, perhaps unverifiable, in striking language, and crowds of men will assent to them, applaud them, and thus there is formed a sort of sham and pretense of concurrent opinion. Such loose acquiescence in vague general propositions is a bad mental habit."

Would it not be almost safer generally to consider the opinion of the minority the more correct one, since it is obvious that only a small percentage of the population possesses any political education to speak of?

And those who still believe in the infallibility of majorities I would ask to consider the fact that in very many, if not most cases immediately before the outbreak of a war the majority in both countries is in favor of that terrible arbitrament. The cry "*À Berlin!*" rang as loud as that: "*Nach Paris!*" in 1870, and is it possible to suppose that both countries were in the right? If either was right the other must of necessity have been wrong, but it is just possible that both were wrong, majorities notwithstanding. And have not all great reformers begun by having the majority, nay, the whole people against them? Where then does that infallibility of majorities come in?

I now pass on to the last of the propositions under our consideration, *i. e.* that dealing with patriotism. I am fully aware that it is a thankless task to subject a popular ideal which through ages has been glorified and almost surrounded with a halo of sanctity, to the cold test of scientific analysis, and I myself would rather leave it untouched. But it is impossible to examine the value of political theories without first establishing the exact meaning of a word which in political oratory plays such an important part as just this one. However in trying to analyze its meaning, I should not like to render myself guilty of any attempt at minimizing or disparaging the nobility of character of all those who in the histories of all countries since the earliest ages stand prominent for patriotic deeds. I yield to none in the admiration of those who willingly sacri-

fice fortune, health or life for what they think to be the common good, and even if they did so in an entirely mistaken cause, as far as they are concerned, it would detract nothing from their merit.

What then is patriotism? Are we all who use this word so often and with such force fully conscious of the exact meaning we wish to convey? It seems a pity to me that Professor Seeley, when he gave us so admirable a definition of the word liberty, did not at the same time deal with this word which in an equally vague manner is so frequently used in conjunction with the former, to play upon the popular mind. For without definition, to use his own words, "political discussion must needs degenerate into that interminable brawl which may be profitable enough to aspiring politicians, but can be of no profit to the commonwealth."

We all know that the etymological meaning of the word is: love for one's country. But clearly there is a great variety of ways in which one may love one's own country, and certainly there must also be some limit to it somewhere. Can for instance patriotism mean that we should do anything, good or bad, that will be profitable to our country and that we should go so far in this endeavor as to utterly disregard the rights and legitimate claims of other nations? I am sure this is not the right interpretation, and we shall have to find out in what way and how far such love of one's country may legitimately manifest itself.

That man must be a thorough cynic, and utterly incapable of appreciating the higher ideals of life, who could fail to see the beauty of the principle by which every man, as part of a whole, unhesitatingly gives up some of his comfort, means and pleasures, and even, if need be, his life, for the promotion of the welfare of that whole of which he forms part. But as in most other things so also in this we must guard against overstepping the natural limits, lest we unknowingly turn good into evil. We must not forget that this co-operation of individuals is only the means to an end, and that, however noble be the means which we employ, it is chiefly the end on which they are dependent for their value. To cite one extreme instance:

we are all familiar with the many accounts of old time brigands' gangs among whom zealous and even scrupulously honest co-operation seems to have been practiced; yet that circumstance did not ennoble their profession or make them less deserving of the gallows. This instance is of course not intended to be a comparison between the ends which civilized nations have in view and brigandaggio, but merely to show that, however noble and beautiful zeal and self-denial of individuals in the promotion of the common interests be in themselves, as a principle they are not *necessarily* good.

In the popular mind of all nations the prevalent idea of patriotism, as far as external politics are concerned, would seem to be the assumed duty of every subject to co-operate in, and promote, the extension of territory and increase of power of his own country; if possible, without interfering with the rights of others, but if not otherwise possible, to the detriment of any other country that may happen to stand in the way. From a moral point of view the objections to such interpretation are obvious and there is nothing to justify it. The idea of self-denying co-operation, it is true, is based on a moral principle which forms part of the ethics of Christianity. But that principle is meant to apply to humanity as a whole, and there is nothing to justify our restricting its application to the particular nation to which we happen to belong. Such restriction is entirely arbitrary, and if we think it right to go so far, there is no reason why we should not go a step further and restrict it to our own family, leaving the State to look after itself. I shall be answered that we could not do that because our family would not be safe for long without the efficiency of the State. This is correct, but if we enter on such practical considerations we should at the same time realize that the State itself must sooner or later lose its power and greatness without that further honest co-operation extending to the whole of the human race, because under a system in which strength alone tells even the most powerful State can never hope to maintain its greatness for ever. A glance at history will show us the truth of this.

Once we have entered into the idea of that Christian principle

applying to the whole of humanity the popular interpretation of patriotism, by which every foreign country is to be considered something in the nature of an antagonist, falls to the ground.

But there is another possible interpretation which would combine the practical advantages of the one idea with the ethical beauty of the other: a system under which the various States, while continuing to look after the interests of their own subjects, would enter into a really honest co-operation among themselves by striving to strictly observe in their intercourse with each other those moral principles of right and wrong which form the basis of our social life; a system by which the various civilized countries, while keeping strictly within the limits prescribed by those principles, would vie with each other, not so much in a race for supremacy and greatest possible power, as in the nobler contest for the first place in the esteem, confidence and applause of the great family of civilized nations. This is no Utopian idea, and I shall explain myself more fully later on. But for my immediate purpose it is sufficient to assume that such system could be generally adopted,—would there be no scope then for patriotism, *i. e.* love of one's country, in the striving for that place of honor among nations? Would there be no further purpose in zealous co-operation of the persons belonging to one nation, or no occasions for noble self-sacrifice in a noble cause? Indeed there would, and the idea of patriotism could only gain in beauty by such change!

I think I may say that at the bottom of our hearts we all have a more or less vague feeling that, if it were practicable, this interpretation of patriotism would be an ethically more beautiful and correct one. I shall of course have to show that the idea is capable of being put into practice, but as it is, the great majority think anything but a strongly utilitarian principle impracticable and call those who deviate from that, enemies of their country. With what right?

It may be objected that during the time of hostilities at least the persons opposed to the course adopted by the Government should, if differ they must, keep their opinion to themselves. This may be expedient and wise in many cases, but it

does not seem to me that it can be considered a duty the neglect of which is equivalent to treason. There is an advantage even in such free expression of adverse criticism, inasmuch as it makes the opinion of the minority a factor to be reckoned with beforehand by the Government, a factor whose importance is in exact proportion to the number of persons belonging to that minority. If the duty of not opposing the Government in time of hostilities were strictly adhered to as a principle it is clear that this would ultimately deprive the people of any voice in the question of war and peace, as any Government by the mere act of declaring war could compel the tacit consent of the nation.

We have now minutely examined the chief contentions of that section of the nation which was favorable to the war, and we have not been able to justify them by any one standard. There are, I am well aware, some who maintain that politics are being conducted according to a standard quite of their own. But which is that standard? Let those who think so compare the recent events in South Africa and those in China. I do not venture to say whether the annexation of the South African Republics is right or wrong, but surely the misdeeds of the Chinese and the provocation given by them were far worse than those of the Boers, yet so far from anybody annexing their country we saw alliances and counter alliances concluded for the avowed purpose of protecting its integrity. Where is here the uniformity of principle?

The arguments of the pro-war party being incapable of being justified by any uniform standard we cannot, in conformity with our theory, attach any value to them.

And the Anti-War party? They have generally supported their views of the question by arguments which, on the whole, are in keeping with the moral standard accepted for our private life. If, therefore, we may assume that their arguments were put forward in entirely good faith, that is to say, if we may believe that they were guided by firm principles to which they would adhere in all questions and under all circumstances, we shall, if we are consequent to our theory, have to admit that their arguments were good and just; that their view was mor-

ally the more correct of the two. But apart from the extremes to which many of them have gone,—so as even to disallow the right of self-defence which in civil law is perfectly legitimate,—we are now confronted by another difficulty. An opinion may be very good and just theoretically, but to be of any real value it must also be able to stand the test of practice. And here it is where the anti-war party possibly failed, not in a moral, but in a practical sense.

We cannot possibly shut our eyes to the fact that the European countries are rapidly getting overpopulated, and that there must be an outlet for the surplus population somewhere. Hence the expedient of a colonial policy. It may of course be disputed that the inability of a country to support all its subjects within its own boundaries should give it a right to take other people's territory for that purpose. But, in the case of England at least, it is an undeniable fact that the rule thus established over such annexed territories has generally proved to be of great benefit, not only to the settlers, but also to the original population, and, by the establishment of free trade, to other countries as well. Now, this seems to me a very strong point, in fact whenever in a dispute on the war I heard it raised,—strangely enough in most cases as a last straw to cling to,—it always seemed to me an almost unanswerable argument.

Even the strictest moralist must admit that there is something in the creation of new and vigorous races that is not altogether bad. Canada, Australia, South Africa, may ultimately become independent nations, healthy and prosperous, while the power of England may decline, but was it not the merit of that England to have created them? This consideration alone seems to me to go a long way towards justifying the standpoint of those in favor of expansion. But unfortunately, though it may be right, it is not in accordance with the laws applying to our civil life. Take the case of a man who has enormous wealth which he puts to the worst use possible. His wealth may be a curse to others, yet the law protects his property. Another man may deprive him of that wealth by force and, keeping only a minute portion to himself, employ the rest

so as to be of the greatest benefit to mankind; yet the law will punish him.

We see then that the principle which seems so sound and not without nobility does not fit into our standard, and without a standard we can never positively tell what is good and what is bad.

Apart from this there is also a practical objection to the unrestricted admission of that principle. If we allow that it is a good thing that England should annex foreign territories for the spread of civilization and the benefit of their inhabitants, we must in fairness allow the same right to all other civilized countries. And this principle once admitted, what splendid pretext for indiscriminate annexation it would afford!

Our inquiry is ended, and the conclusion, I think, is clear. There is no uniform standard answering moral as well as practical requirements to which political opinions may be referred, and without such reference correct judgment is inconceivable. Without it we shall go on for ever calling a thing just, great and noble, which others will condemn as unjust and vile. And what justifies us in maintaining that those others are wrong, or them in calling our views mistaken? As long as one section of a nation looks upon things political from a merely utilitarian point of view without due consideration of moral principles, and the other from an exalted moral standpoint without any allowance for practical requirements, the dispute must remain quite beyond any possibility of settlement and the divergence of opinions necessarily becomes more acute in proportion as the freedom of thought and speech in a nation is getting more and more appreciated.

The remedy seems obvious enough, and considering the great benefit it would confer, if successful, well worth trying. The adoption of a detailed international code of law would of course be one way out of the difficulty, but I fear this remedy is impracticable. Such codification has been attempted before, but the attempt had to be abandoned in the face of the impossibility of bringing about an agreement among the various nations even on the most important points. One of the chief objections to such arrangement is that a law thus created could

not easily be enforced. Yet by agreeing to a code of law of this kind the signatories would have to take a certain moral responsibility for its observance, and it is easy to imagine the complications which might arise from such precarious state of things. No wonder therefore the well-meant efforts in this direction have proved abortive.

What seems to me more likely of success is the adoption by each country of a detailed code of rules of its own, the creation of a standard which will serve as a guide for all its political actions. This would do away with the difficulty of arriving at an agreement among all the powers, it would not give rise to any international complications, and would not be binding except in a moral sense. Its advantage on the other hand would be that it would lay down fixed rules for any emergency that may arise, and enable a nation to form a correct and unanimous, or almost unanimous, opinion. There would of course be no means of compelling any nation to adhere to its standard, but neither would there be any necessity for that. Its only end would be, as I have said, to serve as a moral guide to the subjects of each particular country. And as such its effect would soon be felt. Fixed rules, once laid down, soon permeate the whole population down to the very lowest classes, particularly if their elementary principles are made the subject of instruction at the schools. The knowledge of civil law is not diffused in any other way and yet even the least educated man has a remarkably correct idea of it.

This parallel may also be a useful consideration to those who might object that politics are too complicated and intricate a matter to allow of fixed rules being laid down for any emergency. Surely the subject with which civil law deals is incomparably more complicated and the possible emergencies are infinitely more numerous, and yet they are all provided for in the law.

Apart from this the beginning could very well be made with foreign politics only, this being the branch of politics which most stands in need of such standard. As far as home politics are concerned there is no really urgent need for it, though it would certainly be of advantage even to this branch. Al-

though the present system of legislation may not be quite an ideal one, there is in home politics a certain, as it were, automatic remedy for any mistake that may be made. Their aim is to insure the welfare of the nation, and as every subject of a self-governing nation has a share in the government, this aim will in most cases be ultimately attained. On this principle, broadly speaking, every measure is just that promotes the welfare of the commonwealth, and if any measure is passed which has not this effect, a powerful opposition will make itself felt before long, and the mistake will be corrected. In home politics, therefore, not much is to be said against the Utilitarian principle. But in foreign politics where the governing body of one nation imposes its will on, and decides the fate of, another nation, the case is quite different. Here the utilitarian principle is not generally just, but through the inevitable admixture of self-interest,—apart from other minor causes,—is even very liable to become the opposite. This is a very essential difference between the two branches of politics.

A uniform and universally accepted standard,—for such it would have to be,—which will serve to all as a moral guide in foreign politics is therefore an absolute necessity. The question now arises: what should that standard be?

I have throughout this article drawn comparisons between politics and the rules which apply to our private life and find their expression in civil law. And not without purpose. There is, it is true, a very large number of those who hold that politics cannot be conducted on the same lines as social life, indeed we may say that this is a generally accepted view. But are those persons prepared to tell us why they cannot? This belief is only one more “loose acquiescence” in one of those commonplace theories which find so much favor with superficial minds on account of the great convenience with which they may be applied to any doubtful case. We hear them stated over and over again, until we cease to exercise our minds on the point, but accept them as a matter of course. I, for one, cannot see the slightest reason why the principles regulating our private intercourse with each other should not equally apply, and necessarily apply, to politics. These principles are

Vol. XIII.—No. 3

those which we find laid down in our ethical laws. Now, a nation being only a multitude of individuals (governing themselves by a system of delegates chosen from among their number), can we suppose that principles should apply to that multitude of individuals, which are different from, and often diametrically opposed to, those accepted for the individuals? Can we at all imagine two entirely different kinds of justice, honor, etc.? Or, if there are some who possess such exceptional powers of imagination, where do they take their second versions from, and what do they base them on?

It is impossible not to see that those fundamental ethical principles, if they are to be of any moral value at all, must be well defined and capable of one interpretation only, and that their meaning cannot be in the least altered, unless we are prepared to abandon our present ideas of ethics altogether and set up some new standard for our actions. But such a thing is too unlikely to be worth considering. If on the other hand we maintain that standard for our private life, we cannot but apply it to our political life as well.

It follows from this that in politics as well as in our private life anything that is contrary to the laws of ethics, as expressed in our civil law, is to be considered wrong. I do not of course mean to say by this that the same clauses and the very wording of the law should be made applicable to political matters. This would be absurd, and it is just in going too far in this direction that the anti-war parties generally fail. I am only speaking of the general principles underlying that law. My idea is that a special code of rules, applicable to all political emergencies, should be compiled, which rules must be based on the same principles as civil law. And where practical requirements demand the laying down of new rules for which there is as yet no parallel in that law, these new rules should be based on such principles as are not at variance with any of those already embodied in our civil law. To better illustrate my meaning I will cite one instance: Taking a man's property by force for one's own use is strictly forbidden by law. Yet in politics it is certainly often unavoidable to occupy and annex another country. Now, if certain detailed rules could be laid

down, clearly stating under what special circumstances such annexation may be legally effected, this would not necessarily be at variance with any of the principles of civil law, as by the latter in certain well defined cases the right of distraint may be exercised on a man's property. The essential condition of the legality of such seizure is, however, that the circumstances under which it may be effected should be *clearly specified*.

It is clear that were such political code drawn up for the conduct, say, of foreign politics, it would not in any way deteriorate the chances of a nation's legitimate development of power and greatness. And if it had the effect of putting certain moral obstacles in the way of indiscriminate annexation, I think to all fair minded men this would seem an additional advantage rather than a drawback. It would further allay political disputes by providing that generally accepted standard the absence of which is just the cause of the present violent divergence of opinions. And looking further ahead into the future, it is reasonable to suppose that, if this experiment were made by one of the leading countries of the world and found to be practicable, all other countries would soon follow suit, and once so far, shall we not have made a great step towards that universal peace among civilized nations to attain which such noble efforts have repeatedly been made, and made in vain because premature? That great and noble ideal, if ever it will be reached, not to the fear inspired by powerful combinations, not to paper conventions between the powers, will it owe its attainment, but to the calling to life and directing into the right channels that much more powerful agency: the working of our inborn and ineradicable, though often slumbering and more often misguided, ethical sense!

G. SCHUBERT.

ST. MARGARETS ON THAMES.